

# The Englishman,

## The Englishman, O R

A Letter from a Universal Friend, per-  
swading all *Sober Protestants* to hear-  
ty and sincere Love of one another;  
And a Unanimous Claim of their Antient  
and Uudoubted *Rights*, according to the Law  
of the Land, as the best means of their safety:  
With some Observations upon the late Act  
against *Conventicles*.

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Gen. 13. 8. *And Abraham said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, for we are Brethren.*

Rom. 8. 13. *If God be for us, Who can be against us?*

1 King. 21. 3. *The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my Fathers unto thee.*

Id. Cook. *The Law of England is our Inheritance, yea, the Inheritance of Inheritances, without which we have no Inheritance.*

Vauhan. *The Laws of England were never the Dictates of any Conquerors Sword, or the Placita, or good will and pleasure of any King of this Nation, or to speak impartially and freely, the Results of any Parliament that ever sat in this Land.*

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# The Englishman,

OR

A Letter from a Universal Friend, perswading  
all sober Protestants to hearty and sincere  
Love of one another, &c.

*Dearlly beloved Brethren,*

**I**F neither the holy Scripture, nor humane History, the Reason of the thing it self, nor the general Observation of all Ages, had shewn us the evil of Discord and Division, yet our own Experience had been enough to evince us and future generations of the inevitable mischief, destruction, and ruine that attends it; under the sad and lamentable consequences whereof, we lye groaning at this day. For the ending of which evil at present, and preventing the like for the future, it were good we would cast our thoughts upon some common medium, wherein we all might center: And the beter to prepare us for some such general Proposal, It is necessary that we first consider, What are, and have been, the Causes of our fore Divisions.

And my Friends, the Rise, Seeds, Causes, Growth and Entcrease thereof seemeth, at least in my understanding, to have its Original and Continuance from some irregular and undue apprehensions in Religious matters; Not that Religion in its own nature hath any Principle of Discord or Division in it, no, nor at all, but quite the contrary, being full of Peace, Love, Joy, Gentleness, Forbearance and the like; and to say truth, is the only thing that qualifies and fits us for Communion with Men, as well as with God. But because of our propensity to erre, in our Understandings, or Practice, or both; This sweet, lovely, innocent thing of Religion, is, through mistake, made nocent to our selves and others; and this mistake (dearest friends) is begotten and improved by nothing more than by our departing from those Fundamentals of Religion God himself hath laid, and laying others, formed by our own Imaginations, in the room and

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Read thereof. For our Lord Jesus ranks all Religion under these two heads, of *Loving the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our Neighbour as our selves*: And hath assured us, that in these two Commandments all Religion is contained; and upon them hangs all, both the Law and Prophets. The first doth mostly respect our inward Man, or Conscience: The latter, our outward Man, or Conversation; but both together, our whole Man; our inward, and outward, our Soul and Body.

Many mind the first only, which makes them less Humane than they ought; and many respect the last alone, which makes them better Men than Christians; but few, yea very few, do reckon themselves equally obliged to both, and according to that Obligation, give obedience to both, walking in all integrity and uprightness towards God and all men.

This Partial Obedience to these two great Fundamentals and Commands of God, is the in-let to all the Divisions and Miseries which befall us; for each Profession confines and restrains his Religion very much, if not wholly, within the Pale of his own Perswasion, and too much thinks what he gives to any other, is rather his Charity than his Duty; whereas you see there is one part of true Religion ought to be as extensive as the World it self. For if we take our Lords definition of our Neighbour, our Neighbour is not to be understood by the vicinity of our Habitation, nor by our relation as Church-members, whether of our own or any other Perswasion, for the Neighbour we are obliged, both by the Law and Gospel, to love as our selves, stands not related to us as we are Christians, but as we are Men; as he admirably illustrates, in the instance of the man journeying from Jerusalem to Jericho, that fell among Thieves, where the poor Samaritan proves the Neighbour, and exhibits the duty thereof, when both the Priest and Levite had denied it. So that a Stranger is our Lords sence, may be our Neighbour, when he that lives next us, either by Habitation or Profession, may not: And a poor virtuous Heathen (for so the Samaritans were judged by the Jews) may more exactly perform this part of Religion, than the very Teachers and Guides themselves, of a bare formal Profession. But where there is more than bare form, even the seeming power of Godliness, how much is the Omission of this part of Religion to be lamented, and how unfit are we to serve the whole Creation by it, that yet know not to extend it to him that dwells next us.

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The way therefore to return to Union, and as a consequence to happiness, is to return to our duty, which is the way to both : For if the neglecting this grand fundamental, was and is the Cause of our Divisions, the returning to it, will be the healing of them again : for if it be one part of our Religion, to love Men, as Men, though they have no Profession on them ; surely we grievously go beside our duty, if we do not love our fellow Professors, as such, though of different persuasions from us, or go to restrain this universal Love to the narrow limits of our own particular Churches, and think there is no duty of Love and service from us to any, but such as are of the same shape, stature and complexion in their spiritual understandings with our selves ; the evil of which hath so rent us Protestants, tore us from one another, and so wounded and weakened us, that except we speedily return to a sincere and hearty affection of each other, there is too much reason to fear we may become an easie prey to those that have an equal enmity to us all.

Many Expedients I know have been proposed and practised to accomplish this Christian Union, as the Meeting, Praying, and Exercising of differing Persuasions together, that so they might ferment, and grow up into a mutual Love and Understanding of one another, which is very good, but cannot reach the end of that duty here spoken of, for though it may reconcile the differences of those persuasions which are nearest alike one to another, yet it can go no further. But this expedient of the Lords own making comprehends all, yea the most remote persuasions, because it extends it self, not to Opinions or Professions, but to men : for whether I am of this, or that, or t'other persuasion, I am still a Man, which is the single consideration in this case ; so that the one and only means that would most effectually bring about this, seems to me, to be the thorow and faithful performance of loving one another as Men ; for I find by constant and never-failing observation, that the being loving and kindly affectionate one to another as Men, begets Conversation, and Conversation begets the best understanding of one another ; for that Prejudice that is created by Reports, comes to be removed by Conversation : For when men come to see there's nothing so monstrous and horrible in the Opinions and Practises of each other, as before they were made to believe there was, they grow up not only to a humane but to a Christian Friendship for each other, though different in their Judgments and Persuasions about Religious matters ; Nor is this my observation only, but that which I am persuaded hath the experience of many others, to testify its truth ; besides.

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sides the reason it hath in it self: for no man sees by any others so well as by his own eyes; which if we all had used for our selves, and not trusted to the misrepresentations of others, peradventure there never had been such Discord among Brethren as we have seen.

But whilest I perswade to Love and Unity amongst Christians, though of different Perswasions, I would not be understood to speak a Word for any Principle or Practice destructive to Mankind, as we all know that of the Papists to be, by our too sad experience of their cruel and bloody Massacres, of their burning and destroying whole Cities; a Religion so false and bloody, and so directly contrary to Christianity, that it may rather be called a *Confederacy against Mankind*, than a Religion.

The Scripture tells us, *God opens the ear by Oppression*; and it were happy if now at length God should open our ears, and make us to hear and do this great duty, and in order thereunto, that he would give us two things.

First, To such of us as have been Persecutors and Oppressors, Humility, for the great guilt we have been under for Oppressing one another for Conscience sake, that we may thorowly repent of our bitterness, and acknowledge that to have been the great Cause of all the Miseries we suffer.

And secondly, That he would give to such as have been oppressed, and smitten in the house of their friends for their Conscience sake, not to retain their anger for ever, but to shew a forgiving spirit, by a readiness to be reconciled, and to enter into a Unity again upon this large and noble Principle of *loving their Neighbour as themselves*; that the Prejudices of the one, nor the Fears of the other, may not continue but cease, and be no more, nor shut the door of Mercy upon us any longer; for as our failer in this great duty did open the way to all this Rebuke that is come justly upon us, so our return unto this great Precept of our Lord, would assuredly hand Freedom and Safety to us.

We can no way so much gratify the Oppressing and Persecuting Spirit of the Church of *Rome*, as by our Divisions, for our Division is our Weakness, and our Weakness is their Strength. *Divide & Impara*, hath been their Word in all Ages, but Union hath ever soon put an end to that Empire; For that Government that founds it self rather upon the sins of others, then justice, hath no foundation to support it. Let us act forgiveness therefore on our parts, as a great means to bring about this Union, that as they come forward by Repentance that have Oppressed, so we may meet them with Forgiveness



nels and open Armes, that have been Oppressed, and not neglect this great duty any longer, by retaining our Piques and Offences one against another: for how can we persuade persecuting Enemies we have a forgiving spirit, and so supple, soften and bring them off from the rage they are on, if they see us unwilling to forgive our returning Friends.

There being therefore something in-all of us, that is capable of Union, and that upon the account of this great Command of God, Let us apply to that, as to the common Center, to which the Lines of every particular Perswasion ought to run, and in which they ought all equally to meet, to wit, *The loving our Neighbour as our self*: For beginning here, upon the foundation God hath laid, he will carry on our Love and Affections to marvelous Improvements. Let us therefore go in the Lords way; *First that that is natural, and after that which is spiritual*; as the Apottle speaks in another case, but is also true in this: And let us not lessen the foundations of Love that God himself hath made, by striving for, or after Liberty, to any of our particular perswasions apart, But to keep exactly to this grand Rule of our duty, wherein we are all equally interested in one another, and be zealous contenders for that, as that only which will reach the intire concernments, not of a party, but the whole.

Having therefore such a bottom, on which we all may stand equally, easily, safely, and securely, let us keep right and faithful unto that, and not crumble away our common security, by the divisions and subdivisions of our several Perswasions; and by confining our loves to them alone, content our selves with new and narrow Foundations, which will hold none but our selves, nor we neither, any longer than that by our deviding from this our duty and our common Interest, we have given the ill willers of the whole, a fairer opportunity to fall the fouler on those we have deserted, and through their ruine to make the easier way to our own.

I never was over fond of learning ought from persecuting spirits, yet I think Prudence will help us to gather instruction from all things, and a greater and more natural instruction cannot be given us, than to learn to be as extensive in our Love, as they are in their Hatred of us; which if the Lord would please to enable us to do, it would be a blessed and refreshing testimony, that he is appearing for us, in removing that exceeding folly and madnes hath been among us, in restoring us to the true use of our Reason and understanding again; and we can no way shew the recovery of our Reason and Understanding  
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more, than by our faithful standing to this Command of God, and by, with, and for all that are faithful thereunto, esteeming every ones suffering, that suffers for it, as our own, as indeed it is: For he that suffers for, and in pursuance of the common concernment of this glorious Command, wherein I have as great a benefit as the Sufferer, I am (if I am under a due and right sense of my duty, and my own Interest) as true a Sufferer as him that suffers; and the stealing away the shoulder from this common burthen, hath been that that hath most encouraged Persecuting Spirits in all times, rendred the load more heavy on the backs of some, and continued it longer upon all.

You see how excellent the Commands of God are, and that in keeping of them there is great reward, even safety and security here: but lest there should be any that mind neither the Lord nor his Commands, I will add for our farther encouragement, *That the Fundamental Law of the Land will bear us out in our obedience to the Fundamental Law of the Gospel*; And if we are defended in our Duty, both by Law and Gospel, surely Persecuting Spirits will have enough to do to break through both, and may at the end peradventure see, *That no attempts against Gods People shall prosper.*

And truly it is our happiness, that the Providence of God hath cast our lot to live in a Land, where the Fundamental Laws thereof, run right with, and just to, the Fundamental Laws of our Religion; and that in standing faithful to the one, we stand faithful, and are justified by the other also; so that none can object against us, that they are incoherent, or we so in our standing for them.

For I beseech you Friends consider, We hold by one common Tenure all the Humane Interest that we have, and the only Security we have for the holding thereof, is the Fundamental Law; If this Security be violated upon any one, our Lives, Liberties and Properties are Invaded by that violation, as well as his to whom the violation is done; For he had the same Fence to secure his Freedom as we, and that fence being broken, we have no more security than him: Our keeping up therefore this Fundamental Law, as the Fence or Bank against the Sea, is the alone and only way to preserve the whole; for otherwise, through the Breach thereof, my Right, though seeming more remote will be destroyed as well as his that lyeth next it, and I cannot keep up this Fence, but by defending the right of him that is violated as my own, and my defending his Right as my own, is my *Loving my Neighbour as my self.*

And as it was good for us that we had such forefathers, as laid for  
us



as such Foundations of Liberty as cannot be shaken, or removed, for if they could, experience tells, that long ago we might have been made, instead of free-born Englishmen, as slaves in *Turkey*.

So it were good we would value, prize, and be so religious of these Fundamentals, that have preserved our Lives, Liberties and Properties to us, as we may deliver them entire to our Posterities, as that which is their only Security of their Earthly All. For, *Thou art the strong man armed, that keepeth not only the house and goods, but the good man himself; and all be bath from spoiling.* For our Fundamental Laws are not only Laws themselves, but the Rule and Standard of all future Laws, and that which is the Judge of Laws, in order to the securing our Liberties and Freedoms, or else where were our Foundation? For if an Act of Parliament could pull it up, it had never lain to this day. That this is clear, you may see in the Case of *Dudley and Empson*.

For *Dudley and Empson* had an Act of Parliament to justify their proceedings, yet could not that Act of Parliament justify either them, or it self; for that being made, as this Act against *Conventicles*, directly against our Fundamental Laws, and our English Rights, by empowering *Dudley and Empson*, as this Act doth the Justices of Peace, to Examine and determine *Englishmen* without Legal Process and Judgment of their Peers, which is one of our great Fundamentals; they not only Condemned *Dudley and Empson*, but the Act it self as illegal; and good Reason, for how otherwise could *Dudley and Empson* etc have been banged, since they had a Law of King, Lords and Commons to defend them, unless the Law it self (pardon the manner of speaking) had been illegal?

And how could a Law of King, Lords and Commons be illegal, if there were not a Measure and Standard of the very Laws themselves, that made and judged it so? and what Standard could that be, could so judge it, but our Fundamentals against which it was made?

But that I may not seem to beg so Great a Question, upon which no less than all we have as *Englishmen* depends, I will give you one clear Proof, which may very well serve for many, for it is the acknowledgment of King, Lords and People, upon the very point I am upon, and in that very sence I urge it, that you may see that this is no Novelty, but was the declared Opinion of all *England*, for above four hundred years ago (which at that time, as the Lord *Cooke*, and others, was but in affirmance of our then most Antient Fundamental Laws) and it is the *Anathema* administered in the great Hall at *Westminster*, at the Restoring and Confirmation of *Magna Charta*, the third of May

in the Year of our Lord 1533. King, Lords and People being present, consenting to it. The words are these,

The Continuants; Clergie, and from the Bench of Wals Church; Dequester, all that secretly or openly, by Word, or Council, or make Statutes (pray mark) or observe them being made; or that bying in Customs, or that keep them being brought in, against the said Liberties of **MAGNA CHARTA**, the Writers, Latomakers (observe I beseech you) Cancellors, and the Executors of them, and all those that shall presume to Judge against them,

These are not dark nor mysterious terms, that will admit of divers Constructions, but plain sound Words, not subject to mistakes or doubtings. By which you see what I shewed. First that our Fundamentals are the Standard and Touchstone of all Laws. Secondly, That the Legislative Power it self is tied up, under a dreadful Curse, from making any Statute, or Law against them. Thirdly, If they should adventure to do it, the People are obliged by the same Curse to disobey the Laws they make, and to give obedience to *Magna Charta*, and that Law had never been made. And what were this but to oblige the People to an impossibility? Nay, to destroy themselves, if any Law could be made by any whomsoever to Null it.

Hereby you may see the Value our Ancestors put upon our *English* Liberty, how jealous they were of it; That for fear we should be deprived of the true enjoyment thereof, they would not trust their very Parliaments; no, nor under so solemn an Obligation, with the keeping of them; any further forth, than, if they kept them not, it should be lawful for the People to disobey their Laws, and rather choose to make every individual person thus the Judge of his Liberty, than to lodge it in the absolute power of any to disposl them of it. Knowing that that Liberty could but bring upon their Posterity little tumults and confusions for a season; but the other would imbondage, enslave, and destroy them forever. Keep we therefore to them as to the Common Safety, and let them that run upon us by virtue of any Law made in prejudice of them, consider with themselves, though, as *Emerson* and *Dudley* they may flatter for a time, our Fundamental Laws will be too strong for them at last; For it would *non plus* any person to bring an Instance of any man (out of Warspecially) that ever brake our Fundamental Laws; but that first or last it brake his Neck, for the breach he made upon them.

On the contrary, we read nothing more frequent in our *English* Annals,



nists, than the cutting off Offenders for but endeavouring to subvert them; and how could that be in all Ages; unless we have some Fundamental Laws? That it is the highest Treason in any, to so much as but endeavour to subvert; and how soon would those Foundations be destroyed, were it in the power of any to subvert them: and what need would there be of such diligence in all generations, to preserve them from Subversion, if the Publick Wealth and Liberty of the whole were not concerned in them? Where, by the way, you may observe, how excellently the *English Law* words the Charge of High Treason in this Case; in putting it in these Terms, *Endeavouring to Subvert them*: (For there is no such thing in Nature, as the Real Subversion of them.) (For our Fundamentals were not made by our Representatives, but by the People themselves; and our Representatives themselves limited by them: which we would good that Parliament as well as People would observe, and be faithful to.) For no Legislative Power can Null what their Primitive Power hath established.

And, as if our Forefathers thought they could never take too much care to deliver these Laws safely down to their Successors; That although all persons concerned in the executive part of the Law, are solemnly and strictly sworn to its due Observance, and all persons that shall make any Laws contrary to our Fundamental Laws, or any that shall yield Obedience or Observe them being made, heavily Cursed; yet, as if they thought they could never too sufficiently Secure them to us, do further appoint and order: *That the Oaths be delivered to every Sheriff of England, to be Read four times in the Year, before the People in the full County; And likewise to all Cathedrals where to remain to be Read to the People twice every Year.* So that if we have any regard to our own Safety, or the Security and Happiness of Posterity, we ought to have the same tender care and esteem thereof as they had.

The Law of England abhorreth nothing more than the Selling, Denying or Delaying of Justice and Right, and as much as possible removes all Obstacles to any of these, nor leaving any thing of Life, Liberty, or Property to the Breasts of Judges or Justices, but all to be determined by the Judgment of our Peers or Equals, against whom in all Cases there are Legal Exceptions, and if wronged there lieth an Appeal; and whatever Practice or Practices, though new, or often, or of long continuance, may have made Encroachments, and Violations hereupon, and so are called *Presidents*, and urged for Law; We say with the Lord Chief Justice *Brampton*, *that we are bound to stand upon Presidents, but upon the Fundamental Laws*; and, though *Presidents*

For that is the Standard to try whether they be right or counterfeit, and all such being weighed in the Ballance of our Fundamental Laws, will be found too Light.

The Magistrates therefore ought to look, not so much whether they be Regularly according to the late Act against *Conventicles*, as whether the Act it self be Regular and according to the Fundamental Laws, one of which expressly saith, *We cannot be Dissenters of our Liberties, Properties, or any otherwise injured or destroyed, but by the Lawful Judgement of our Peers.* Wherefore let all Mayors, Justices, Constables, Overseers, Churchwardens, and all other Officers that shall pull or hale away any part of our Liberties, Goods, or Properties by virtue of this Act, that hath no virtue in it, know (not by way of threat, but admonition) that though we are willing to forgive them as Christians, yet as *English-men* we cannot forgive them : Nor will it be admitted for any Plea, that they should have been fined themselves; for the very Fines themselves in this Act, are as irregular as the Act it self : And to say truth, all Laws that have need of such Fines and Mults annexed unto them, do carry in their very Front a suspicion they are false and differing from our Fundamentals. For good Laws, and such as agree with our Foundations, carry such Self-evidence and Conviction of the Publick utility of the whole, that they need not the Sout of any Penalty to quicken the Execution of them.

give any one leave to take away my Liberty as a Christian if he can? because it is an utter impossibility. For if I have the Freedom of my Person to go where I will, and do what I will, so it be not against the Publick Peace, nor to the Injury of others (which is the Liberty of an *Englishman*) I can hear, and joyn in Worship with whom, and where, and when I will. The enjoyment therefore of our *English* Rights, is the broadest, best and safest way to secure our Christian Rights, whereas if we are deprived of those, we cannot enjoy the freedom of these.

Since therefore we have so blessed a *Medium*, as will secure the Interest of our inward, as well as our outward man, of our Christianity, as well as our *English* Rights, and that to every one as well as to our selves; and thereby making us truly capable of fulfilling the great and glorious Law of God, of loving our Neighbours as our selves.

Let us be found (my dearest Friends of all Persuasions) faithful thereunto, by helping, succouring and assisting every one that shall suffer for this Common Cause, either in their Persons or Properties, as those that suffer equally for our sakes as their own. And since we have the Fundamental Laws of God, and of the Land on our side, Let us constantly adhere thereunto, and leave the Issue, Success and Event thereof to the Lord; And Let the *Roman* and *Antichristian* spirit know, that unless they are stronger than him, they can never prevail, but must lye down in sorrow with all their fellows that have gone before them, under the dismal wo of them that strive with their Maker.

Having thus faithfully discharged my duty, and having some comfortable persuasions you also will yours, I have as much quiet in my own Spirit as the Day and the Suffering thereof will admit, to him that is not only in Profession but Reality, and esteems it his Dignity so to be.

My dear Friends,

Your sincerely affectionate

Friend and Servant,

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POSTSCRIPT.

**L**et the present Sons of the Church, who boast so much of the Ancient Fathers, hear what *Tertullian* and *Lactantius* say concerning Persecution:

*Tertullian* ad Scapulam. *It is our Property, Humane Equity, and Natural Right, to allow each man to worship what he thinks fit: No man can receive Benefit or Prejudice by the Religion of another. Besides, it is not consistent with Religion to Force men thereto, since that ought to be embraced Voluntarily, and not by Compulsion.*

*Lactantius de Justitia, Cap. 20.* *There needs no Force, nor injury, Compulsion, because Religion cannot be enforced: To make willing, you must use Persuasive Words, and not Stripes. — Why then do men Rape and Persecute, that so they may increase, instead of lessening their Folly? [The Bible and the Gallies] Piety and Cruelty are things of a quite different nature, nor can Truth subsist with Force, or Justice with Oppression. — If you will defend Religion with Blood-shed, Torments and Oppression, you will rather Pollute and Defile Religion thereby than defend it. Nothing is so ought to be so Voluntary, as Religion; which ceaseth to be such, if the Worshipper perform it with an Unwilling Mind.*

Now if our *Reverendissimi* have no regard to the Holy Scriptures, the Precepts of our Lord Christ, and Practice of the Apostles. Or if the Judgment of such whom they account their most Eminent Fathers, have any Influence upon them, and if their Consciences be not wholly seared, *That seeing they shall see, but not perceive; and bearing they shall bear, but not understand; They cannot but abhor themselves for having been so Principally active in Procuring, and Instrumental in putting in Execution the late Act against Conventicles; Persecuting Christ in his Members, and Ruining many thousands of industrious People for Worshipping God according to their Consciences, and Obeying God rather than Man.*

And if they shall still go on, thus Imprisoning, Ruining and Beating their Fellow-servants; saying, *The Lord delayeth his coming. The Lord of such Servants shall come in a day when they look not for him, and in an hour that they are not aware of; and shall cut them asunder, and appoint them their portion with Hypocrites, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*



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15th. Therefore pray not thou for this People, neither lift up cry nor pray-  
er for them, neither make intercession to me; for I will not heare thee. Jer. 17. 17.  
Seest thou not what they do in the Citys of Judah [ENGLAND]  
and in the Streets of Jerusalem [LONDON.] And the souls of  
them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the Testimony which they  
held; cryed with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, Rev. 6. 10.  
dost thou not Judge and Avenge our Blood on Them that dwell on the Earth?  
He which testifieth these things, saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Rev. 22. 30.  
Even so come Lord Jesus.

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